



BIZARREBEYONDBELIEF

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BizarreBeyondBelief: The first time I went out (painting)...

SMUG: I was tagging on my elementary school (duh) well before I really understood graffiti. My boy who was "better" than me at the

time was totally hesitant in giving my amateur ass a second with the can.

BBB: The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was...

SMUG: Nothing really stands out in my memory. My friend

once scared a racoon into the humber river and it drowned in front of us. I guess just seeing really grimy homeless set ups in random locations is always unnerving but I can't say I've ever witnessed anything very fucked up.





BBB: The funniest thing that ever happened to me (while painting) was...

SMUG: Funny shit is always happening while I paint but the one thing that stands out to me most right now happened a few summers ago. I was with TRED and some people at a daytime

spot pretty far from any street or store so once you got there you stayed there kind-of-thing. Anyways, TRED was having trouble with one of his full cans he needed for his fill. He started to bang the can against a rock (don't do this). Luckily the can burst in the opposite direction of his face or this

would've been a much funnier story. So there goes his important colour, all burst onto the sun baked concrete. He needed this colour so badly he began to puddle the paint into his hands and is running back n forth to the wall to spread it on by hand. I was in tears.



BBB: The scariest thing I've witnessed (while painting) was....

SMUG: Probably almost falling off a roof or something. Nothing really tho.

BBB: The stupidest thing I've done (while painting) was....

SMUG: Getting arrested.

BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was....

SMUG: Nothing really strange but I guess some moments when you lose yourself and just put yourself out there on the side of a highway or something.

Those moments are always interesting memories.

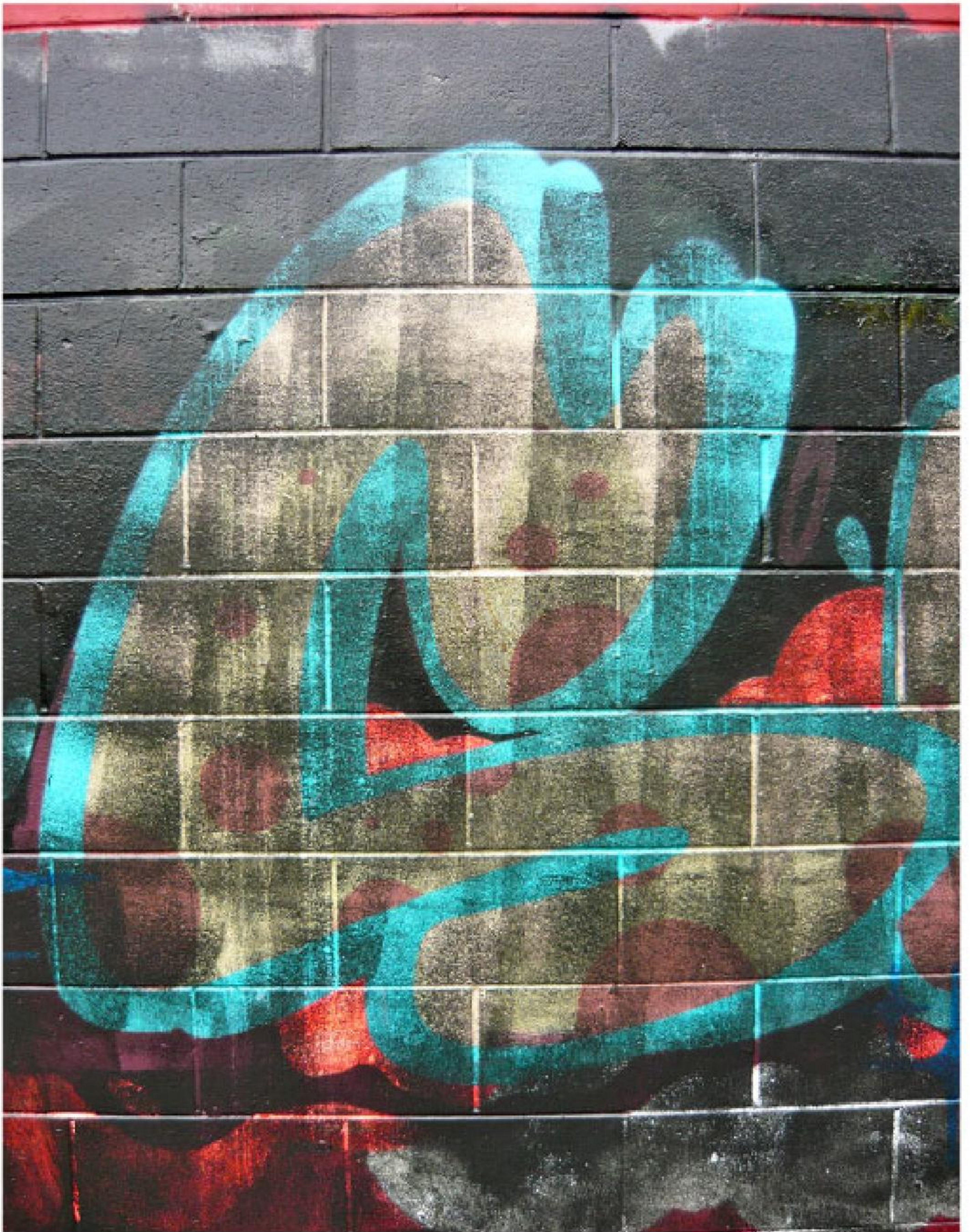
BBB: The last thing I'll ever do again (while painting) is...

SMUG: Get arrested.

-Shout out to LSD GH and all my friends

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/21646058@N08/>









BizarreBeyondBelief: How would you describe your work to someone who has never seen it before?

Listen04: Erm, I cover a lot of different bases I guess. From illustration to canvas work, paste-ups, drawings, doodles and the odd commission. The work all has a naive sincerity and at times surreal tone to it I suppose. I like to look at things in a very childlike way, maybe point out some of the absurdities of life and people. That sounds pretty dreadful, but I just like to question things in my own little way. Life is something that actually baffles me a bit at times actually, I think you maybe get a sense of that from the work.

BBB: A lot of your work uses humour, how important do you feel humour is in artwork?

Listen04: The art world can be quite dismissive of humour in work I think. Maybe they feel like it cheapens it, I don't know. In the work I do it is a key factor, especially in the most recent work. I try my very best to avoid cheap laughs or be too surreal though. It is difficult, there is a fine line when it comes to humour in art. I live in fear of being labeled as "wacky".

BBB: Do you feel that it



plays more of a role in illustration or do you feel it can and should be used in any and all mediums?

Listen04: Humour does seem to play more of a role in illustration for some reason. Maybe because illustration is more accessible in some way? I think it goes back to the art establishment being a bit

wary of humour. Like it somehow devalues art. What I love is that if it is used in the right way the work (in whatever form it takes) can reach way more people than just those who appreciate art. David Shrigley and Mr. Bingo have been doing it for years. It's about looking back in on ourselves and pointing out the stupid bits.

Listen04: Near impossible; for me at least. There are a lucky few who manage it but I can't help but think a lot of people sacrifice a bit of their integrity along the

way to pay the bills, which is understandable. Each to their own. I tried it for a while. I was offered a big job designing for McDonalds, doing artwork for burger

boxes and stuff. They offered me the chance to travel to America and Asia but I turned it down. I would rather stay at home and draw frogs humping.





BBB: As a UK-based artist do you feel that the arts community has a lot of room to grow and achieve success within it?

Listen04: I have no idea. I don't really feel part of it if I'm honest. It has its own little cliquey circles. The UK art scene has been, and probably always will be, a leading force. We have an amazing heritage in terms of art history in the UK but I don't look at things in a localized way really, I prefer to think on a bigger scale.

BBB: What or who would you say is your primary source of inspiration?

Listen04: Erm...Life and people.

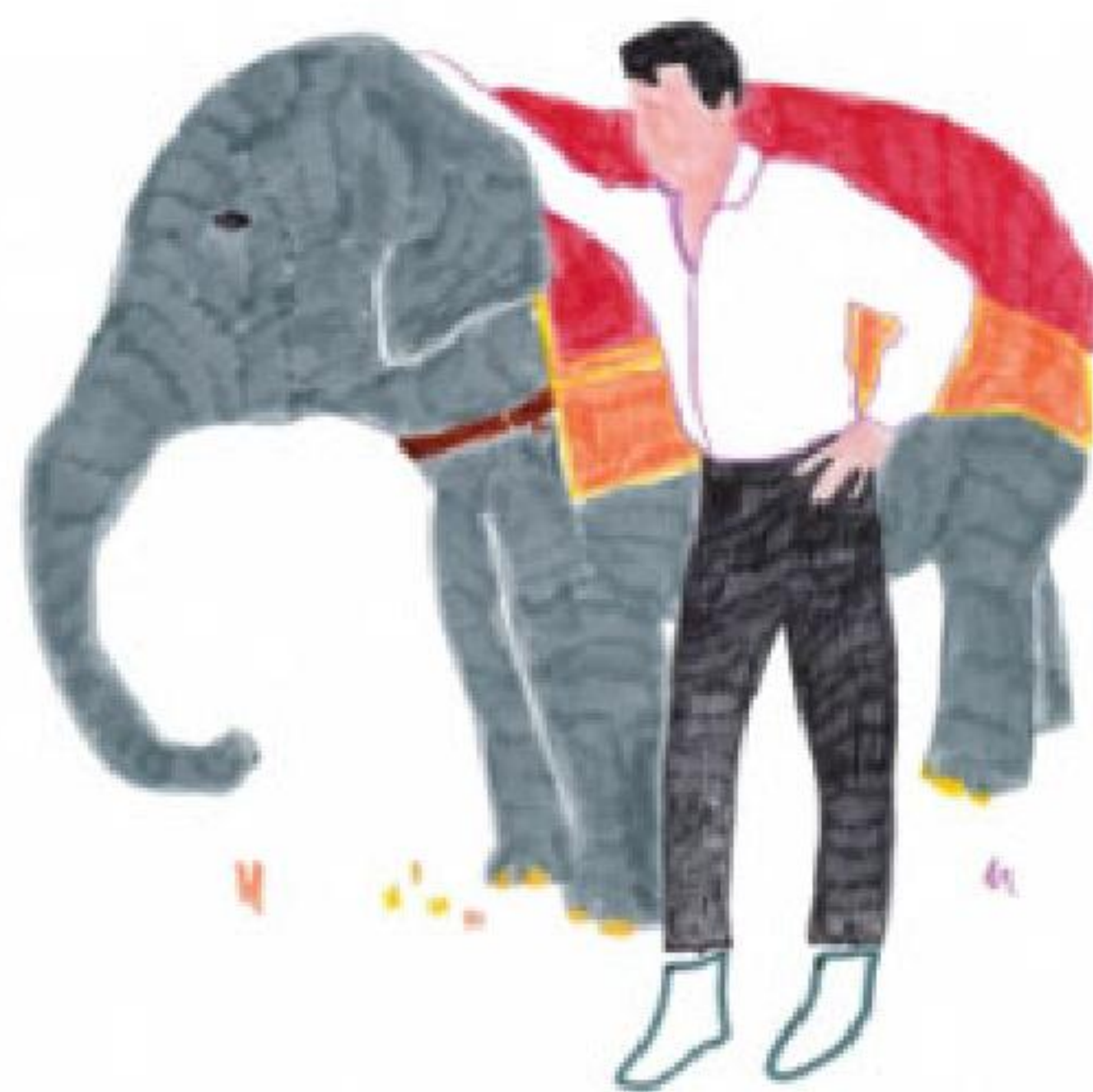
BBB: What's one thing (not art related) that you could not live without and why?

Listen04: My wife, for a million and one reasons.

BBB: Are there any big commissions or projects we should look out for in the near future?

Listen04: I'm working on EP artwork for a few people, I've got a solo show and a book in the pipeline. I've been doing a lot of pop-up exhibitions too. With help from a few people we stick up 12 drawings at a time, kind of like a public exhibition. We have done them in Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Leeds, Manchester and Valencia so far. There are a couple planned for L.A. as well. Most of them get taken down within a few days but I like the idea of making people smile and the work is more accessible that way.

<http://www.listen04.co.uk>





BizarreBeyondBelief: How did Visual Orgasm start and what was its overall intention when it began?

VisualOrgasm: The website started in September of 1997 so we are going to be at fifteen years into this inter-web stuff and it's a long time for a website to be kicking around for. I got into graffiti in 1996 and start photographing any graffiti I saw. I had gathered a small collection and wondered how this new hobby of mine could be put to use. A friend mentioned the internet and suggested the idea of creating a website to share photos. Since I was a pubescent kid I came up with the

name Visual Orgasm, found another buddy to create a website and got Art Crimes (<http://www.graffiti.org>) to host it. Back then I had to scan all the hard copy photos since digital cameras were just coming out. Since the inception the intention of the website has always been to document and share Canadian graffiti from across the country.

BBB: Did you believe that VO was going to become one of the premier sites for Canadian content when it began?

VO: No, I didn't think it would become what it is today or last this long either. I still

have a hard time believing it and compared to other graffiti websites these days it isn't a huge contender. That is why we got a new design done to push it to the next level. I really want it to be the hub for Canadian graffiti. I hope over the summer we can spend the time to create more profiles and really work on the vault, which we want to use as an educational tool or resource with articles, documents and information to keep showing how graffiti has developed in Canada. The blog style and easier navigation of photos has been real nice and being able to feature particular artists or crews in one update is fun to put into action.





BBB: how would you describe the evolution of the scene Canadian graffiti scene since the site started in 1997?

VO: That is a difficult question, as for Canada as a whole I think each city is going through ups and downs in terms of losing legal spots, having crackdowns/raids but there is certainly an increase in interest in graffiti and it is not slowing down. It is fun seeing how each city in Canada is different. Certainly it is great seeing some very impressive murals coming out of cities like Montreal and Toronto that are on

some next level compared to ten to even five years ago. I think more Canadians have connected with American writers and that always helps the profile of graffiti happening in the cold north. Sure we see more kids going retro in their styles and just splashing paint on a wall but that is just another stage in scene. As for the internet it has certainly has changed and that is why we knew we had to adapt. Sites like flickr have changed the dynamics of photo sharing, which is great but we have to put up a fight.

BBB: Has there been any province or more particu-

larly city in Canada that you feel has just elevated their game above all others? If so, where and why?

VO: I always love visiting Montreal. I haven't for a while but it just makes people who love graffiti skip around like school girls twisting their necks to see what is around the next corner. I would love to see some of the impressive murals they are pulling off in person. Toronto is always fun too. Compared to other cities these two just have so much more going on in terms of graffiti.

BBB: Considering how explosive this sub-culture has become, how do you feel that Canadian Graffiti scene compares to the world-wide scene?

VO: Canadian writers are continuing to travel and leave their mark world-wide. Having the crew connections with world-wide crews like

small scale of things in terms of graffiti but we can certainly put out some talented writers and continue to put in work.

BBB: Graffiti as an art-form is relatively young, do you feel as if what we've seen over the years is the tip of the iceberg or has it already become stagnant?

BBB: Now we obviously know you guys write, so whenever we talk to writers we love to hear some stories. On that note, what's the craziest shit you've ever seen while out painting?

VO: Sadly I have never written a lot and nothing too crazy has happened.



156 is impressive. As I mentioned before even the connection to American based crews like FC, TFO and IBD to Canadian crews expanding by putting down American writers like VTS. Canada will always be on the

VO: I think there is always room to improve and we'll continue to push boundaries wherever we can. The Europeans rock it, Asia is exploding and graffiti almost touches every part of the world, you can't beat that.

Just the usual urban grimy stuff all writers experience. Writing certainly opened my eyes to the other side of life where people face homelessness, addiction and whatever else they can do to survive.



BBB: What has been your favourite spot to paint in Canada?

VO: My favourite experience was taking VIA rail across Canada and stopping in Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. The trip ended in Halifax and Sectr took me to a great spot underneath a bridge with a line of train tracks and a huge lake behind us. It was nice mix of natural surrounding with the lake we could jump in to cool off and then the urban feel of the concrete and chance that a train could roll by at any minute.

BBB: Considering you guys

have been one of the go-to Canadian sites for approximately 15 years, what else can we expect from Visual Orgasm in the future?

VO: We just really want to be the hub for Canadian graffiti. If people are looking for information for a graffiti event in their



city then we should have it on our calendar or if your looking for your favourite artist we at least have a few photos of their work. It will take us some time to build up the proper content for some of the sections but we hope people continue to support us like they have over the last fifteen years. I

would like to think our new direction will entice people who have stopped checking us out or have given up on the internet as a way to promote the whole scene, come back and give it another shot. We still rely heavily on contributions so we are going to be harassing some of our contacts to

share some of their gems so we have some new and possibly never before seen stuff to share, which is hard to do these days. Thank you to everyone who has stuck with us and been contributing over the years, we wouldn't have been able to do it without you.

<http://www.visualorgasm.com>









BizarreBeyondBelief: The first time I went out (painting)...

2TONE: I'm sure it was in 1995. With my bro Wham, some back of the factories type deal. I wrote 'suicide', which was the shittest name. We taxed the paint from a local model shop, what can I say it was toy but a rush nonetheless. Good times, it was like getting drunk or stoned for the first time.

Instant high!

BBB: The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was...

2TONE: Seeing my mates head getting smashed into concrete repeatedly.

BBB: The funniest thing that ever happened to me (while painting) was...

2TONE: In 2000ish, motor-

way bombing with a large group, we were spotted by workers and cops. We all scrambled up a large cliff and scaled a huge tennis court fence. One of the bro's lost his footing and bailed down the cliff to the feet of the cops. Must have been a good 10m fall. Luckily he wasn't seriously hurt, we stashed all the cans in someones backyard. (Must have been weird to walk out into your backyard and

discover a gang of empty spraycans), we chilled out for a good while before walking up some back streets.

Anyway we decided to split up to look less suspicious. We planned to duck cars and hide in peoples driveways as they approached as we knew the cops would still be looking for us. The first driveway

we went down the car we were avoiding turned right into the same driveway. Fuck. The owners of the house had arrived home, these two big, muscle-bound bodybuilder type guys jumped out of the car and yelled "you try'nna rob our house eh cunt!", I've never ran so hard in my life as that night, we were off down the

street with these arse-holes in tow. Security was called and soon they joined the chase. We managed to give all of them the slip and get a taxi home. I guess the funniest thing was seeing our mate fall down the cliff, in hindsight it was terrible but it seemed really amusing at the time.





BBB: The scariest thing I've witnessed (while painting) was...

2TONE: I don't think I've ever witnessed anything I'd describe as scary while

painting.

BBB: The stupidest thing I've done (while painting) was...

2TONE: I don't do stupid things when I'm painting. I don't want to get busted so I keep as low-key as possible. It's best not to draw attention to yourself.

BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was...

2TONE: Painting illegal trackside walls 10 deep

during the day and getting away with it numerous times.

BBB: The last thing I'll ever do again (while painting) is...

2TONE: Smoke weed, it just does not agree with me. Paranoia and painting utter piles of shit. I'd rather paint drunk, get my ciders on boy!

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/toneytwotoes/>









BizarreBeyondBelief: You work in a variety of different photographic fields, do you have a particular one that interests you the most?

Adrian Vit: Photojournalism. Documenting life as you see it when you see it. This is a broad field to me. Weddings even fit under this umbrella – I'm the fly on the wall, documenting the day as I see it, not just forcing people to stand and smile when I tell them to. Spending the day with my Nona who has Alzheimer's is another more classic

example. I'm currently making my first documentary about a great woman who lives in Dallas, Texas.

BBB: How does your creative processes and approach change for each?

AV: Photojournalism and creative work have different lead-ups to the actual photo-shoot. For creative work you need to impress yourself with your ideas. I'd compare the rush of when the inspiration hits to when you figure out a problem. The

difference with photojournalism is that the best you can do is check and know the location before hand if possible. It's a freestyle with your creative arsenal and you need to be ready at a second's notice. You need to find that rush of inspiration or else you'll miss the reality you try to capture in a beautiful and interesting way.

BBB: Is there a certain strand of the photography practice that you believe lends itself to making more money?

AV: Weddings. You need to build your talent in creative shoots so that you can give those two people who are giving you a nice piece of money for one of the biggest moments of their life with family members dressed their best and who won't be around forever. The lure of money attracts so many people that have a digital camera. I practice to be worth every dollar for that full day of photojournalism multiplied by fashion photography. I also realize that a lot of photographers don't respect

wedding photography because of the wide range of awful wedding photographers and intimidation of making an impressive wedding album.

BBB: Is it possible to truly maintain artistic integrity and achieve success or do you have to succumb to the masses at times to make ends meet?

AV: The way I plan to keep my artistic integrity is that photography will never be my only profession. I don't want to have days where I

don't want to work or feel sick of my job with something that has taken me so many places. Buying some studio so I can shoot on a white backdrop for people and magazines that don't interest me. I'm going back to school for 911 dispatching next fall. I want to benefit the masses with integrity while still shooting for the love of it, doing photo-shoots for people in other countries and leaving memories, feelings and messages that will last long after I'm dead. That's success to me.



BBB: As a photographer, do you believe that the camera plays a role in how well a photograph turns out or is it just as possible to have compelling work with lesser equipment?

AV: I think equipment is important and not necessarily the camera, it's the glass. I have shot tropical weddings, been published in magazines and created some of my best work with what is now an old-school 10.1 mp camera. What's important to me regarding the camera itself is having a single lens reflex model. This allows you to actually control your photo on a whole other level that Instagram can't take you to or let you feel like this photo is really yours. Save up for glass.

BBB: How do you feel about "art vs. photography"? Do you believe photography is as much as an art as painting or sculpture?

AV: Photography is the new painting. Just like the renaissance took the concepts of painting to a higher level through perspective, proportion and 3- dimensionality, we're in a renaissance again. SLR's are built



like the human eye and receive lighting signals like the retina gets hit with light in its rods and cones. The brain has a better computer, but when we combine what we create with the digital eye or film and let our brains

use its power to analyze the image, it's a beautiful thing.

BBB: As a photographer who shoots action shots of graffiti writers, what is it about these missions that attract you?



AV: I grew up with a creative bunch of different kinds of people. I respect art and how unique people do it. Humans have been writing on walls since we lived in caves – we just didn't have buffers back then. I also love 'urban exploring' (or so it's called), I figure out how to get into old, shut-down factories, Nazi prisoner camps, broken down schools, rappelling off of bridges, the side of highways, knowing cops or guards could run you down at any second while you are trying to be creative while you're sending a message is quite the rush. You can't be a toy when your painting with

cans or pixels. The graffiti is culture, the exploring is investigating a time capsule you wouldn't see otherwise.

BBB: Do you feel a "rush" in a similar way that the artist themselves feel?

AV: Absolutely. I get that important rush editing wedding photos and feeling like the 4th most important person at the ceremony, I get that sexual rush creating beautiful work with models, I get that integrity rush documenting life as I see it, I get that happy, smile across your face because you just made it rain with a brainstorm rush, I get that special rush of love and

respect when I do something for my family or good friends. Life is short and photos are capturing less than 1/100th of a second but they stick around which is an important thing to me.

BBB: What is it about shooting in Toronto that differs than that of other cities you have traveled?

AV: Well not being a photographer that finds studio shooting very inspiring, winter slows down my production. Being a travelling photographer makes you seem like a big deal, which can be nice. I also go hunting harder for shoots while I'm

travelling because that whole life is short, I may never be back here feeling kicks in. If you find a one of a kind location in a foreign country you better make something dope or else what are you doing?

BBB: Would you say that attending an art school for photography is a necessary step for someone looking for a career in it or is an innate drive and passion that conducts success?

AV: I'm still one credit short of getting my photography degree. I'm not going back at this point to feel good about a piece of paper for my ego. I certainly learned a bunch from college, but I learned more from having some workshops with a respected photographer and was getting jobs before I was finished school because I was hungry. I work well on my own, and I realize some people would enjoy group learning. Like a sport, you need to train well. Get out

there – use that mind that you analyze social, political, sexual situations with to develop your images. I can't see a weak mind creating a strong image without luck. That drive will lead you to where you want to get to, but you need the knowledge and experience to actually make it. Don't settle and always be your biggest critic. Learning about the world, not just how to shoot on manual expands your mind and creative potential.



BBB: Where does Adrian Vit see himself in 2020?

AV: I can't say yet. In 2010, I was in fire fighting school and then I got in an accident after a photo-shoot where I ended up in a coma for over a week and I lost vision in my left-eye, which

prevents me from becoming a firefighter. Good thing the camera only requires one eye. I thought getting into fire fighting school was a big change, but now I know what a big change is. I'm starting my new path and I've got dreams of

moving south, I plan to be that 911 dispatcher, teaching workshops to young photographers, that spends his weekends with models taking photos and continuing to film documentaries that all add to peoples lives.

<http://www.adrianvit.com>







SMITH/GREY



BizarreBeyondBelief:
Considering the two of you born and raised in completely different cities, how did Smith/Grey meet and form?

Smith/Grey: We first meet in Copenhagen, Denmark where we worked at a design agency on various creative projects. While Birgit later on went back to Vienna to finish her Architecture degree and work in the industry, Sofus ventured out to Vancouver to study Visual Effects for the Film industry. After that we ended up living in London where Birgit attended the Royal College of Art to gain an MA in Jewellery Design and Sofus working in the Film industry. After lots of conversations and exchange we began to develop jewelry design concepts together. It felt like a natural move as we are other

inspired by each others ideas and approaches. BBB: Considering Grey was coming from an entirely different back ground from jewelry making (graphic design and film), what was the turning point or pivotal moment in your career which led you along the jewelry path?

Grey: It was not about leaving one medium for another but rather extending the canvas that I use for storytelling and jewellery. It is indeed a different medium to work with but the challenges are extremely interesting and something I am excited to continue to work with.

BBB: The group is based in London, how would you describe its fashion and accessory scene?

Grey: In short; vast. London is dynamic and full of 'pock-

ets' where cultures and scenes can grow which makes it a tremendously interesting and engaging city to live and work in. This diversity is a great nourishment for our many interests and inspirations.

Smith: It's a city that thrives on its diverse mixture of inhabitants which is very, very powerful. However to me it sometimes also seems way to fast paced and superficial to a degree, so it's vital to skim through the huge mass of work carefully.

BBB: As creative types, it's understood that most individuals have a particular way of working, how would you describe the creative process as a duo?



S/G: We each have our own interests and fascinations which we explore. Once an idea is cultivated to a specific point we then introduce them to each other. From there on it is a back-and-forth between us to formulate the idea and to create the designs and supporting material.

BBB: Because of this dynamic does it make the process easier or more difficult?

S/G: Both actually; because one idea might resonate equally interesting with both of us and other ideas might be too distance for the other's frame of mind. It's a tough question to answer as it creates a completely different way of working. In a way I think it makes things easier as one can bounce back and forth ideas and therefor decisions and results are seen quicker.

BBB: Due to the intricacies of your craft, how much attention and time would you say goes into designing and creating each piece?

S/G: Once the idea has settled and the final design sketches are done we do samples of the pieces. Depending on the design these are made by hand using traditional wax carving techniques or digitally modelled and then 3D



printed in wax. These initial wax models are cast, finished off, moulded, waxed and the cast again before being finished off again. It's actually quite a long process that requires many small steps to get to the final piece. This design phase might be straight forward and other times it is an iterative process to make the design stand out. It's often surprising to see that simpler designs take longer to be perfected than complex shapes. When it comes to the final production of

the pieces there is a strict set of quality control on each individual piece prior to dispatch.





BBB: The company works in both male and female jewelry, is there one sex in particular that is more difficult to create for?

Grey: Both sexes have their challenges. Men and women do not wear jewelry the same way and designing for them is not the same either. But both like to know the inspiration and stories behind a piece.

Smith: I think it makes it easier that we both represent a sex and therefore understand what both

women and men want. For me it would be hard to solely create men's jewellery as it would probably turn out way too feminine and therefore it might not be very attractive to the male customer.

BBB: Where would you say that the group's primary influence or inspiration comes from and what keeps the group motivated?

Smith: Absolutely everywhere really. We never look

at other people's jewellery for inspiration, it mostly comes from completely different fields such as childhood memories, biological drawings, you name it.

Grey: Inspiration lies in everything; it's just a question about piecing them together. Sometimes it is specific people and their achievements which sparks an interest; other times it can be a mixture of memories entangled with recent events which sparks ideas.



be a objective when we design but if this is achieved in the process than that's part of the story and we wouldn't wanna get rid of it just to not be traditional. Tradition is a beautiful concept and everything around us is build on something that has been there before. If there is a sense of tradition in a piece than that is only a compliment to it's predecessors.

BBB: Jewelry is a very important accessory to fashion and style, is it a fair assumption to say that jewelry can make or break an outfit?

Smith: I'd like to think that it expresses one's personality even more than clothes do as it usually has a very personal touch. And a lot of times jewellery is kept much longer than clothes, so it

takes on a completely different position in someones life. It's more of a carrier of a story than a trend that will pass quickly.

BBB: Your work is modern yet holds a traditional essence to it, do you feel as if timelessness is a primary concern in creating accessories?

S/G: We don't consider it to





BBB: What does the future hold for Smith/Grey? Are there any secrets or side projects that are in store?

S/G: We are currently in the early development phase of new men and women collections both exploring new territory with distinct voices,

but to get the full story you will have to follow us at www.smithgrey.co.uk or on Twitter @SmithGreyLondon.

<http://www.smithgrey.co.uk>





BizarreBeyondBelief: How do you feel working as an artist in Toronto has been? Has it helped or hindered your progress in your career?

Adrian DiLena: Toronto is where I grew up and live. Kind of feels like the water around the fish. There's definitely a value to feeling like you know the place you reside in. There is a sense of belonging. There is also a sense of knowing and responding to your audience and community.

BBB: Being an artist from Toronto and it being a different approach to art in the city under new government in the realm of public funding. What steps do you believe can and/or need be taken to improve that?

AD: There's a lot going on in Toronto right now in terms of public funding for arts. There are some new programs being implemented on the municipal level that have shaken things up. This is the first year so its kind of a wild card still. But there are a group of loosely affiliated street artists who are increasingly bold, challenging and articulate. They could make the the city an incredibly beautiful, thought provok-

ing and active landscape and the programs that are being implemented could really leverage that. There could be a renaissance of sorts in Toronto in the coming years as all of these seemingly disparate artists come together more and

more and are able to take advantage of the changes. I think as street art has emerged at the post-graffiti practice that it is, there is a broadening of influences, conversations and tactics that have made it extremely interesting.



BBB: We know this affects you both as an artist but also as an entrepreneur, being that you work at Whippersnapper Gallery. Do you feel you are affected greater in one avocation?

AD: For the record; I am not an entrepreneur - Whippersnapper is publicly funded through the Ontario Arts Council as well as other funders on a project basis. Also, though I am a director of the gallery, neither I or my colleagues receive a regular salary from the organization. We do it because we love it. I am not affected greater by either, but they've had different impacts on me. Whippersnapper has been an altogether defining experience in my life. It represents a sharp learning curve in public funding, grant writing, working with people and other artists who I don't already have relationships with. Its pushed me to think differently about art and forced me to put my evolving ideas into words on a page. Its also been challenging because Whippersnapper has come to curate work that is much different than my own practice; we do a lot of social practice work, a lot of participatory and relational works in public space. I think that there are some approaches to art



making that are more fun to facilitate than others. The work that Whippersnapper facilitates is very active and I get to play a part in it to various degrees. Our gallery is simply not suited for traditional presentations of painting, drawing photography. My own work, for better or for worse, is much more introverted. I see it as a bit of a counterbalance to Whip. I can be still and at rest with it - I can experiment and spend time contemplating. Usually at the gallery we're on the seat of our pants, figuring things out as we move through the life of each exhibition. My own work is more static. I think sometimes in a funny way that the

stuff I make is book smart and the gallery has streets smarts (and book smarts).

BBB: Being that you studied for a number of years in Montreal, how would you compare and contrast the cities in the general overview of the arts?

AD: I don't really like comparing the two cities. They're different. Montreal is great. Toronto is great and more expensive. Live in them both and get to know each as individual places. Both have their magic. I guess Toronto could be cooler if there were massively disruptive student protests, but what are you going to do?



BBB: That being said, you are currently working and living in Toronto, what's the primary rationale for that decision?

AD: It *was* girlfriend, but you know, nothing gold can stay. For the last two years it's been Whippersnapper. It's such a massive project and just not ready to leave it yet. Beyond that, I will one day attend school once more, so that will be a catalyst for change if I end up outside of Toronto. As I

mentioned earlier, it's also very nice to have a community - to know your city - which is sometimes hard as a student. Students are more often than not take on a tourist mentality. I will say though, I do plan to die in Toronto at a ripe ol' age.

BBB: A lot of your work is inherently political, do you believe that art's primary intention is to generate political discussion?

AD: Sometimes when people say political, what they mean to say is political coverage or political rhetoric - i.e: in reference to the actions of politicians. There are very few artists who can make art that relates to this kind of political discourse without being didactic or shallowly propagandistic. The other, more appropriate meaning of the word is a broad examination of philosophy put into practice by institutions and the state. How do we negotiate resources, how do we value people, how do we relate to ideas, how do we create collective and individual identities and what are the mechanisms that inform those decisions? So I think 'political' in the context of this question should be interpreted broadly and in this sense political work is not pigeonholed into some CNN-esque talking head simplification of topical issues. To answer your question though; I pretty quickly grow bored with work that is not engaging some kind of social discourse. I appreciate material practices and explorations, but I think they should be towards a provocative end. What I crave in art is something that extends beyond the visual object. How does an artist's production solicit a

conversation larger than the specific object in front of me? It seems to me that the most important, profound works are philosophical systems of ideas mediated through objects as opposed to written/verbal language (as is the tradition of philosophy). So if you think of it as a philosophical discourse instead of a purely aesthetic one, art must be accountable for its assertions completely. I read a Thomas Hirschorn statement that said something along the lines of "I became an artist to become completely accountable for myself". That was a really simple but bold statement for me at the time. It connected a sense of self honesty in your work to the larger topics of politics. All of this is not to say that artists must talk politics. The exact opposite; there is a responsibility to understand how our personal lives, our emotions, our narratives, values and everything else that informs our experience is part of one giant negotiable fabric and that every honest exploration of these pillars of identity is a critical pursuit that is in itself a political endeavour.

BBB: How important do you believe manifestos and "artist-statements" are to creative work?

AD: They are two different

things: Artist statements should be transparent and balanced expansions of the background of the work, addressing broad thematic and concerns of the artist. They should be nuanced complementary texts and not become more meaningful than the work they describe. They should offer support to a viewer in understanding the artist's perspective.

Manifestos, on the other hand, are shit. They too often present an ideal form of how the world should be. It

seems that this ideological assertiveness or fanaticism is getting pretty tired. That's why something like Occupy is so decentralized and seemingly about everything - they can't trust a single voice, or single person's idea of what should be the answer. It's nice to have bold statements, but there is a history of these usually not panning out and in hindsight its almost always a matter of the manifesto's hubris and inability to adapt or change as needed. Don't trust people who traffic in world views.





BBB: Having your hand in a variety of art-forms, from mixed-media to realism, is there is there a certain media that gives you greater pleasure?

AD: Right now I don't even know what to call the work. The best thing I can think to call it is image sculptures. I used to take a lot of pride in being able to work in a pseudo realistic style. I got to a point though where I was setting up these photo shoots, building my own reference material and everything. Then I sat down for 20 hours to re-draw it so

that the image could remain where I felt comfortable - within a drawing/painting context. It just became kind of exhausting and felt absurd - spending all this time "tricking" the viewer into thinking the flat canvas was actually 3D. Also, I began to see that context - painting/drawing as incidental to the ideas of the work that there was no reason aside from nostalgia or complacency that made painting a more appropriate medium than say photography. I wouldn't say that my more recent work feels more pleasurable, but it feels

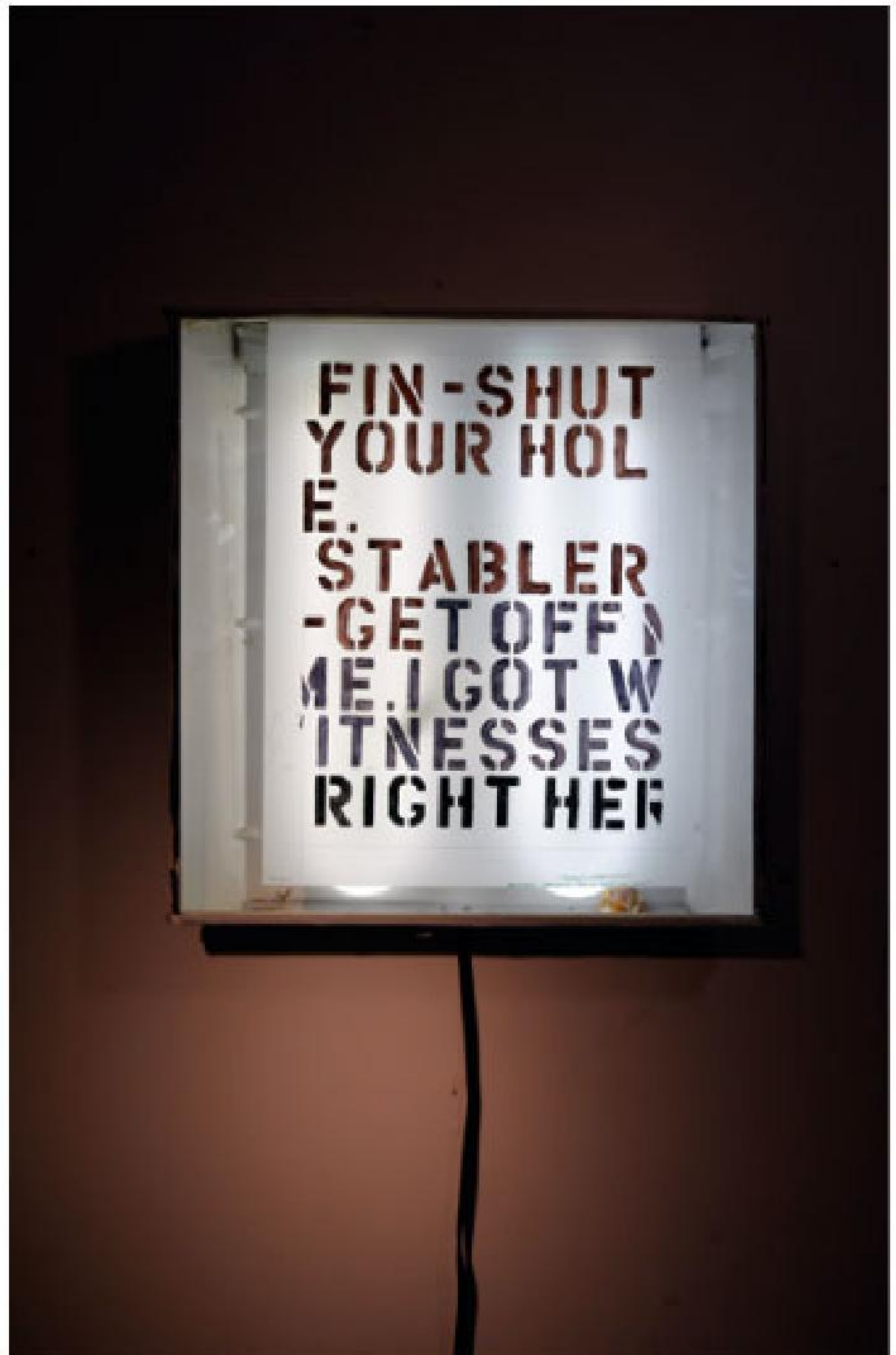
more honest and more sensical - which is also probably why it flits around so much between various forms. Text and systems of grammar have become central to most of the work, and I spend a lot of my energy exploring these in a visual form. But, I don't quite know how to resolve things yet.

BBB: As an artist with a former background in graffiti and mural art, how do you feel graffiti has affected the artistic community, especially within the "elitism" of art?

AD: It should be stated that my background in graffiti shouldn't be taken too seriously. It was a big part of my life, but I doubt very much if my days of hanging out under Lansdowne bridge had much of an effect on anyone else. As an observation, graffiti is something that really seems to get youth excited - it's this amazing balance of community, dedication, skill, art and style - very alluring to young creative people and lends a sense of self. There are very few youth and "cool" communities or scenes that reward people for creativity, originality or boldness of expression. It contributes to the development of strong and innovative art scenes in a lot of different cities, if only by the sheer number of people who are willing to express themselves through the channels provided by the graffiti community. There are a lot of really amazing artists that are still practicing graffiti as well as people who have moved on to other practices, but those earlier experiences in graffiti gave them a dedication and intensity. If nothing else it served as an entry point to art that other practices don't always provide. Maybe this is what you mean by the "elitism"? Graffiti has traditionally been a very ground up field of art and obviously

doesn't have the same system of qualification or certification (or massive debt loads) that impede entrance into other practices. That being said, graffiti has its own systems of exclusivity and can shut

people out for other reasons. I don't really mind there being "elite" people in any discipline as long as it is by virtue of their skill, study, commitment and innovation. I think people often confuse pretentiousness with elitism.



BBB: How do you feel your approach to work changes when you are working collectively with other artists on a project?

AD: Working with others can be incredibly difficult. If I am going to work with someone and we end up just doing

our own thing, I'd rather call it off and just do our own thing without the pre-tense of collaboration. If you're committed to working with other people you need democratic sensibilities and need to be open to negotiation, which is a skill on its own. In the past couple

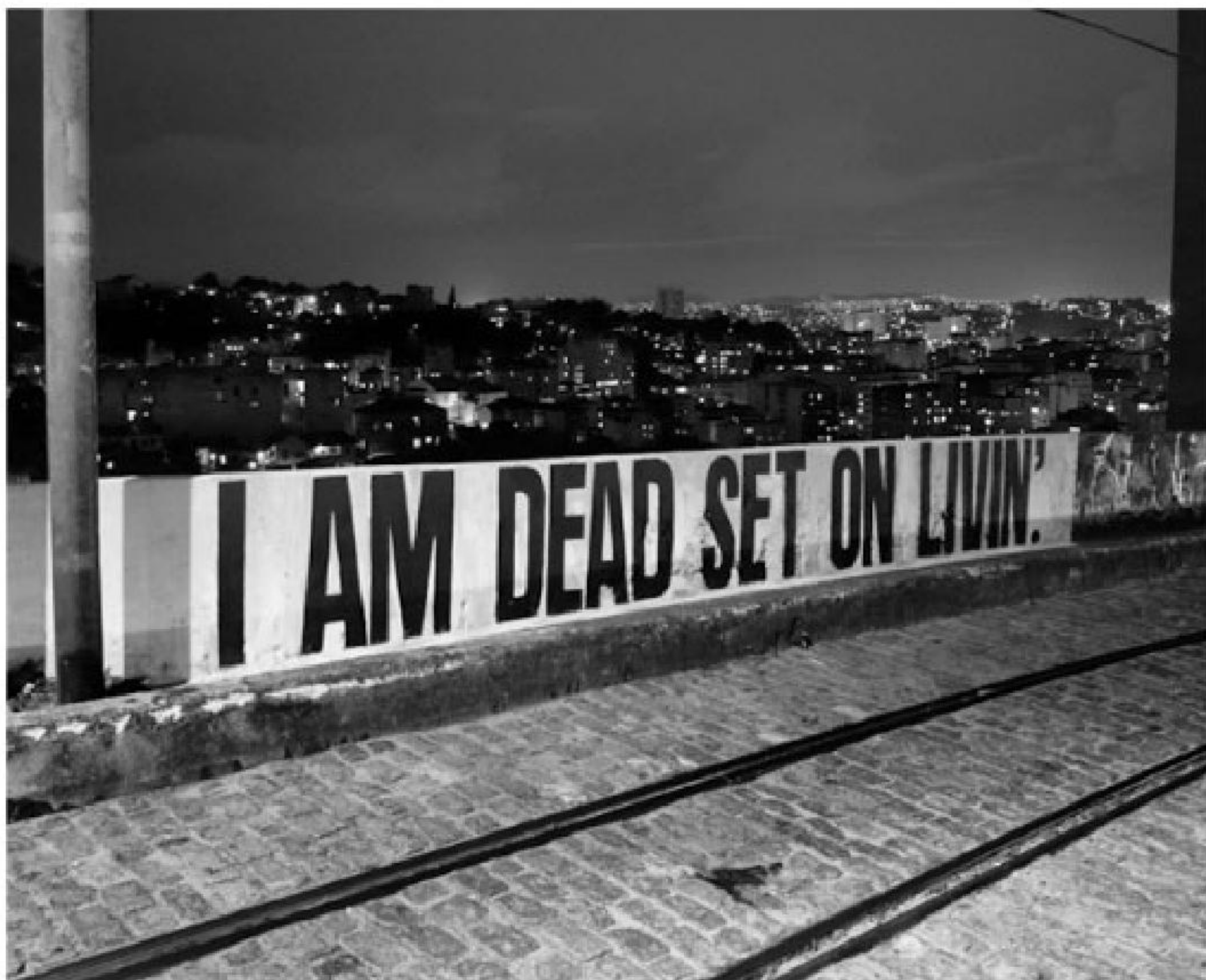
collaborative endeavours I've taken on for music events I've put aside such an emphasis on content and focused on materials. It's easier to make it about play, experimentation and fun than trying to prove your point. People get along better.

<http://www.adriandilena.com>





SEAN HART



BizarreBeyondBelief: Your work is almost exclusively text-based, what is it about text or lettering that has influenced you to use it as your primary source of your artistic message?

Sean Hart: THEY SAY WAR IS PEACE. PEACE IS SECURITY. SECURITY IS ORDER. ORDER IS COMFORT. COMFORT IS MONEY. MONEY IS HAPPINESS. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY. IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

TO DOUBT IS USELESS. TRUST OUR MASTERS. FOLLOW OUR LEADERS. PRAY OUR GOD. PAY OUR TAXES. PLAY OUR GAMES. RESPECT OUR RULES. WEAR OUR UNIFORMS. HELP US TO MAINTAIN ORDER BY BUYING OUR WEAPONS. WATCH OUR PROGRAMMES. DRINK AND EAT OUR MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS. SLEEP DEEPLY. DREAM OUR DREAMS AND THEN YOU WILL BE WHAT WE ALWAYS

WANTED YOU TO BE. YOU WILL BE GOOD CONSUMERS. YOU WILL BE POSSESSED BY THE POSSESSORS. YOU WILL BE GOOD CITIZEN. YOU WILL BE CIVILIZED AND YOU WILL BE HAPPY I SAY "FUCK THEM".

I use words because like the prediction of George Orwell in "1984" the "Novalangue" is already here, so it's a war of words...

My work is above all a work

of writing - with the paint then with the light. It is a set of poetic correspondences which declines under various series of texts which I stage in the space

Crystallizing "stories" ceaselessly in movement, carrying in them the dream and hope in action of an extreme freedom.

BBB: How does the urban

phy, his story, his architecture, his colors, his flavor, his music, the hour of day night in which I take my photography ...



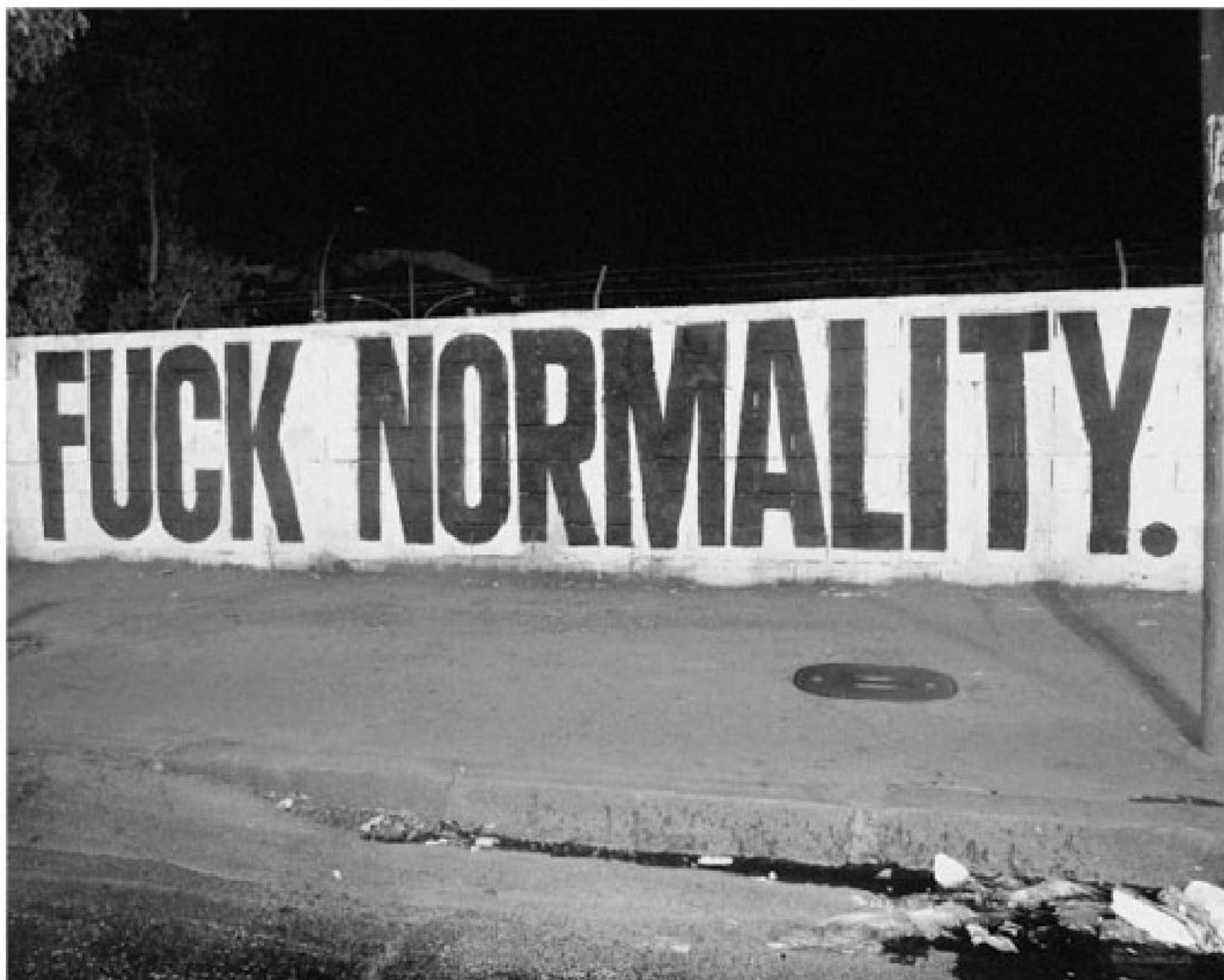
then photograph. Every image, every series is enough for its own existence but they all revolve around the same dream, the same idea, the same envy, the same themes to add up and answer some of the others.

landscape define how you choose to create your work?

SH: As a director, I take into account every details of the space / time in whom I register my text. His geogra-

BBB: How important do you feel the typography is in your work?

SH: I create the typography I use - I want to have a typography very simple, like typography used for advertising.



BBB: How would you crib your strategy in the choice of lettering you pick?

SH: 99.9 % of the text I use comes from me, the other 1% is quotes from people I like.

BBB: We have seen that you create work in other languages, do you think it's a necessity to create work in the English language as opposed to

others?

SH: I write a lot in english because it is short, good for slogans, good for punchlines and goods for word games. Sometimes I write with the language of where I am, for the music of this language and also because sometimes it's difficult to traduce without losing good meaning.

BBB: Do you feel it's more

important to create your work in the street as opposed to a canvas or a panel in a gallery? Why or why not?

SH: In fact I can't do what I do in a canvas, but I also have some idea for canvases and installations. In fact, I am looking for a gallery to expose the photography of what I do in the street and to show theses canvases, installations.

BBB: Knowing that your work is out in the street and with the ephemeral nature in doing-so, does it create a sense of gratification or paranoia, knowing that your work may be erased?

SH: For me, like I response in the first question, the finality of my work is the photography. It's very important to understand that. So I don't have any problem with the idea that my stuff can disap-

pear. In fact, I like that. I like movement. I can never understand "street artists" who cry about their lost pieces just like I can never understand capitalist rappers.

BBB: How do you feel the public reacts to your work and its message? Does this even matter?

SH: I paint sometimes during day and I talk with a lot of people. For sure it's

important what they think. And about how they react, when they're not angry, it's a nice to talk.

BBB: How would you justify your creating your work in illegal fashions to someone who's opposed to the craft?

SH: I don't have a general response. It depends who I have in front of me and it depends on this person's arguments. But I would like to not have to justify that.





BBB: If you could only use one word for the rest of your artistic creations, what would it be and why?

SH: I don't know.

BBB: If your studio was about to burn down, what three things would you grab from it before it

torched and why?

SH: It's funny you ask me that because I don't have a flat. I travel a lot so I leave in a lot of different places. So I don't carry a lot of stuff. I try to be as light as I can be. I also try to be as detached of material things as I can, but today I still need my com-

puter, a pen and piece of paper.

BBB: What can walls, abandoned buildings and mattresses expect from Sean Hart in the future?

SH: For that you have to follow my work in my website.

<http://www.seanhart.org>







REMI/ROUGH

BizarreBeyondBelief: It's pretty well documented that being a writer in London is extremely difficult, would you agree it's accurate to say there's a different dynamic to painting in London than other cities?

REMI/ROUGH: Definitely. It's difficult to paint walls and it's also hard to come through as an artist who doesn't necessarily want to conform to graffiti ideals and traditionalist attitudes. It's a lot easier in most other cities I've been to.

BBB: Being such a well traveled graffiti artist, are there any cities in particular that you may compare to London in atmosphere, quality and quantity?



R/R: I think Paris back in the late Eighties and early Nineties was very similar to London in a lot of

ways. It's changed considerably since then though. I used to love going to Paris to paint at that time, as it felt very comfortable.



BBB: If you had to escape where you currently are now, what 3 things would you grab, why and where would you go?

R/R: I would grab my family, my Marco Grassi painting and my all of my art books. I can't live without good coffee so it would probably be somewhere in Southern Spain, as there's always good coffee and sunshine. Although, I love Southern Italy too, so maybe

that could be my alternative option.

My wife and daughter go everywhere with me too.

BBB: Being an artist who's not only prolific in his time, but in longevity as well, how would you say graffiti and/or has transformed since you began?

R/R: I kind of don't look back nostalgically at graffiti. It obviously references a lot of what I do now but it's so

antiquated in its attitude and a lot of it just hasn't progressed in any way and I'm always of the mind that things should grow and progress. I suppose if anything it's given me the ability to paint to large scales and not be afraid of size. It also, from a social aspect, has given me some of the best friends I have to this date and a network of artists that I know and work with from all over the world. But the now is my priority, not the then.

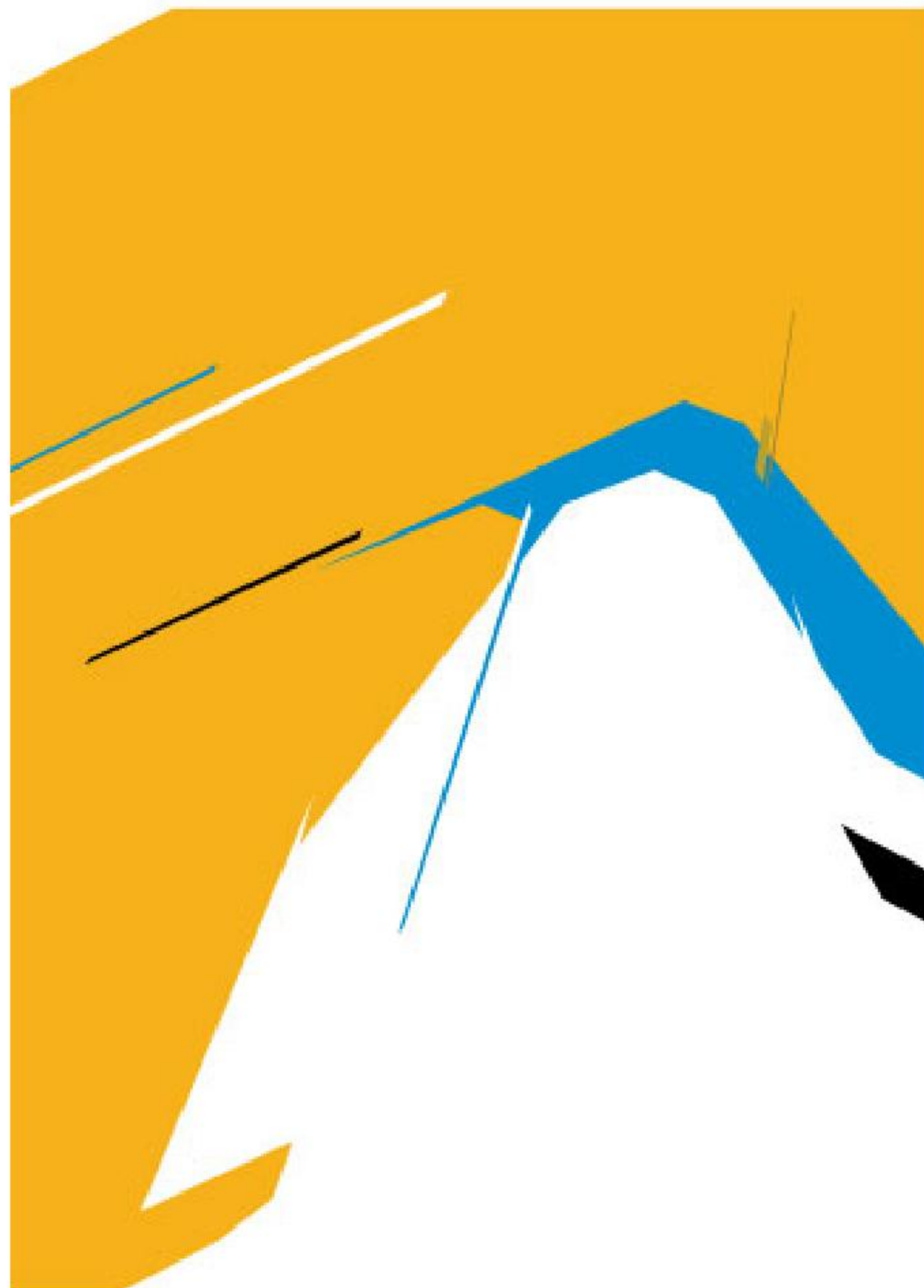


BBB: As an artist who came from the street to the gallery scene, how do you feel the credibility as a graffiti artist is affected?

R/R: Graffiti went straight into galleries in New York in the early eighties, it's been there ever since and it's a natural progression for any artist, whether he be a graffiti writer or a sculptor, to share his or her art with the world. So, from that perspective credibility can only be cemented! The "hardcore" as they like to be known don't have that same perspective, they only want to share amongst their peers. I always thought the art of getting up should be all global, not all city.

BBB: How, if at all, do you feel your creative process differentiates from your approach to fine work as opposed to street?

R/R: I guess my approach to studio work is slightly more considered but on the whole I try not to differentiate what I do from street to studio. It's just a question of scale. I try and achieve the same sense of depth and texture in both. I possibly prefer having the larger scale works as a way of experimenting onto



smaller surfaces though.

BBB: What's a day in the life of Remi/Rough like?

R/R: Wake up in my nice new house in South London, get my daughter up and off to school. Check my e-mails and various social media, then I usually hit the studio for a few hours

and try and finish up an artwork that I have on the go. Pick Liliana up after school and life goes domesticated once again. But to be honest everyday is different and some days I'll find myself in Miami or Hamburg painting large walls... who knows where I'll be tomorrow?



BBB: If you were restricted to only one artistic medium and 3 colours within it, what would it/they be and why?

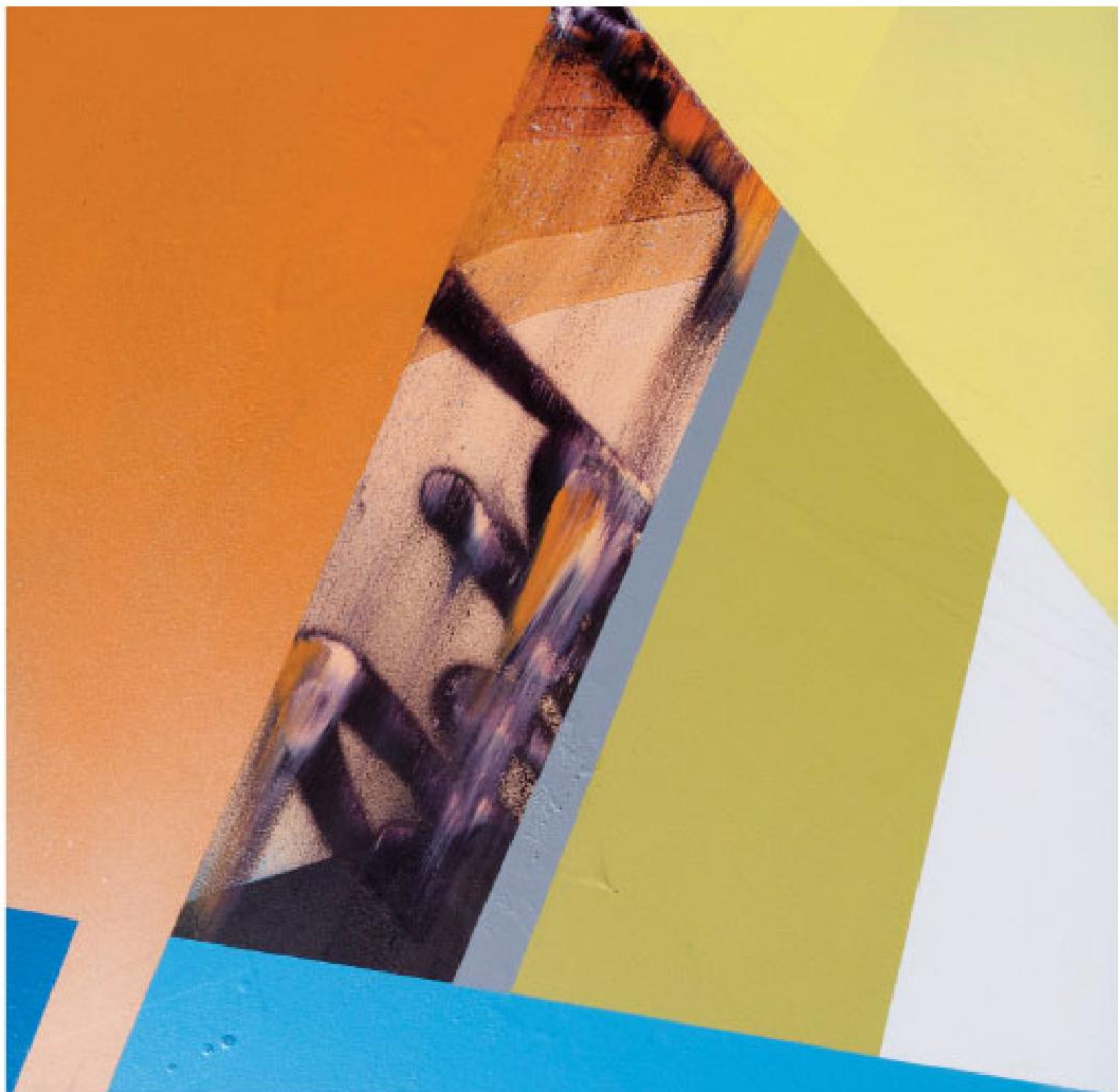
R/R: Matte emulsion in red green and blue because I

could mix and make every other colour I need from just those three.

BBB: Have you every held any reservations or rethought your current avocation or

have you always thought "this is for me"?

R/R: I think I've been lucky enough to have been able to tailor my working life to suit me. There's nothing I'd change at the moment, I'm very happy with what I do and how I do it.





BBB: When your beard is long and grey, where do you see yourself and what's Remi/Rough doing?

R/R: Ha ha, my beard is pretty grey already. When it's longer and greyer I'll be doing exactly the

same as I am now, making art, in whatever means, in whatever format or medium I can. I'll stop when I'm dead

<http://www.remirough.com>











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